



INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE CENTRE
FOR COMMUNITY WATER SUPPLY AND
SANITATION (IRC)

MEMORANDUM

To	NORAD, Harare	From	NAC Working Group, NORAD Evaluation Report, ZIB 403
Ref	ADM/12/5/B	Tel	702910
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TITLE: NAC COMMENTS ON NORAD EVALUATION REPORT

**ZIB 403 - EVALUATION STUDY: RURAL WATER SUPPLY.
SUPPORT TO ZIMBABWE'S WATER SECTOR. JULY 1989**

1. These comments have been prepared by a Working Group on behalf of the Planning and Budgeting Sub-committee of the National Action Committee (NAC) for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation. They express the general views of the group and are based on the comments of the following ministries: MLGRUD, DDF, MEWRD, MOH, MCCD, MFEPD.
2. The report contains a broad evaluation of the Norad-supported water and sanitation programme, complemented by detailed studies of selected district programmes. The conclusions of the report are generally positive and encouraging. Many of the findings and recommendations are in keeping with current thinking in the sector and can be readily supported. Others, however, require more detailed discussion and review.
3. In general terms, the consultants' findings in relation to manpower, planning, and management capacity are supported. On the other hand, we would take issue with some of the recommendations and comments made in relation to the current approach to implementation and the scope of work which integrated projects should undertake.
4. In particular, we are puzzled by the consultants' apparently contradictory views that, on the one hand, there is evidence of potentially serious limitations on management capacity and, on the other, the recommendations that the scope of the programme should be broadened to include a major concentration on water development for "productive purposes". If there is to be any expansion of the scope of NORAD's support to the sector, it should be in the form of additional projects, supported with additional funds, and not at the expense of the primary objectives of the integrated projects.
5. We are also a little puzzled that the title of the report refers only to rural water supply. The integrated concept includes both water supply and sanitation, and sees both as equally vital programme components. Although the report does make

some recommendations in respect of the sanitation component, we would have liked to have seen this part of the programme given more prominence in the review.

6 The comments made in relation to the Master Plan (ZIB 003), Mashonaland Crash Programme and Manicaland IRWSS project (ZIB 006), are generally supported. In relation to the Master Plan, a decision on its adoption by Cabinet is now in the political, rather than the technical, realm and there are limitations on what further action can be taken to hasten approval and/or modification. In respect of the "dispute" between MEWRD and DDF over drilling responsibilities, considerable progress has been made in reaching agreement and the matter now awaits final agreement between the Principal Secretaries of the ministries involved. This issue should not longer be seen as an obstacle to the endorsement of the Master Plan.

7. The Working Group's comments on the principle findings and recommendations contained in the report are given below.

FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS - A.

a. Planning, supervision, and maintenance may become "unmanageable for the local staff". (p.viii)

b. "...capacity and capability of (MCCD) could become a crucial constraint for the continued expansion of the sector programme". (p.viii)

c. "...availability of qualified manpower will soon become a severe constraint for the expanded development..". (p.ix)

d. Continued sector management support recommended on a limited scale to continue the strengthening of appropriate and sustainable Zimbabwean capacity. (p.xi)

e. "Support to national sector development tasks should be limited and gradually phased out in order to achieve a less complex programme." (p.xi)

COMMENTS

Concerns about manpower and management capacity are widely shared throughout the sector, and in this respect the consultants' findings are uncontroversial. Manpower and training needs are currently under review.

At the same time, many district programmes, though experiencing some difficulties, are having a significant degree of success in meeting the current demands of the project. Provided that the scope of the projects is not broadened, and that concentration remains on the basic objectives for which integrated projects were introduced, the evidence suggests that successful implementation is viable.

Management and personnel support at a reasonable level will continue to be a needed for some time to come, however. In providing this support, dependence on expatriate advisers should be progressively reduced and local advisory capacity developed in such a way that absorption into the public service is viable if and when appropriate posts become available. Far more is actually being done by sector ministries to address the issue of reducing dependence on external support than the report appears to recognise.

MCCD is identified as experiencing particular problems. This is not disputed and points to the need for both a close assessment within this ministry of this problem area (which is currently underway), and the development of closer cooperation and

mutual support in the community elements of the programme between MCCD, MOH, and MLGRUD (through LGPOs).

In the main body of the report it is suggested that the position of the District Administrator's office be strengthened so that MLGRUD has stronger management authority over district projects. This is not seen as a practical, or desirable, option, though steps are being taken to strengthen MLGRUDs's coordination role.

FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS - B

f. "broadening " of district programmes recommended. (p.viii)

g. "...water development for agricultural use such as minor irrigation and garden watering should be given priority within the programme in future.." (p.x)

h. Implementation of pilot project for small-scale irrigation proposed. (p.xi)

i. Comprehensive district programmes should be developed where water for productive purposes becomes a major feature (p.xi)

COMMENTS

In view of the consultants' findings in relation to manpower and management limitations, the apparent suggestion that there should be an expansion of the scope of integrated projects appears contradictory. Although the idea in itself is a valid one, particularly when set against the issue of cost recovery, it does not seem appropriate to consider incorporating secondary projects into the basic project concept. In some places, communities themselves have developed initiatives of the kind recommended. Such initiatives should obviously be encouraged. The development of follow-up projects, perhaps supported by NGOs, would also be appropriate.

In the preparation of long-term District Water Development Plans, the "productive" use of water resources should be given consideration, but with a view of future project activity when basic provision has reached an acceptable level. In addition, MOH is currently developing a "Promotion of Gardens" study to investigate the feasibility and desirability of broadening the approach in this way.

In addition to management/capacity constraints, there may also be technical constraints in that groundwater availability in many parts of Zimbabwe is known to be marginal. In view of this, water supply for human consumption must obviously be the priority.

At this stage, the provision of clean drinking water is the most urgent issue and should remain the dominant focus. In our view, the idea of making minor irrigation and garden watering components a "priority" or "major feature" within the programme is out of the question, given the current management and financial constraints. If this is to be done, additional funds and new projects would be required. Resources should not be diverted from the integrated projects to support additional activities. For the time being, we should view the potential health benefits of the provision of clean drinking water "productive" in themselves.

FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS - C

j. "...commitments requested from the communities at present are relatively modest compared to programmes in other African countries". (p.viii)

k. *"The drilling equipment..has..in many instances dictated a pace of implementation which is incompatible with the slow process of genuine community participation.."* (p.ix).

l. *"So far the NORAD supported programmes have contributed little to progress in terms of female influence at the respective programme levels."* (p.ix)

COMMENTS

During the crash programmes which preceded the integrated projects very little consideration was given to community elements. Subsequently, however, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on these. The assertion that the demands made of communities in Zimbabwe are "modest" in comparison to programmes elsewhere in Africa is unsubstantiated. No example of a more thorough community programme is given. In fact, visitors from other African countries have often been highly impressed with what has been achieved in Zimbabwe in the development of a very difficult project component.

Although we recognise that there are many shortcomings to the community aspects of the programme, we feel that we have a very strong basis for further development. Concrete and positive statements would be much appreciated to assist further development. This applies equally to the comments about women's involvement in the programme, which we also find unclear and somewhat contradictory.

The suggestion that the drilling programme should be slowed down in order to encourage "genuine community participation" is also offered without substantiation. The evidence in Zimbabwe would seem to suggest that a slower rate of water point development will lead to community disillusionment and a reduced willingness to participate.

The real problem is one of good management and the proper synchronization of activities to ensure that adequate community mobilization has been undertaken before drilling commences. Drilling should then be carried out swiftly. During the period of drilling itself there is very little required of communities and delays create the risk that the momentum built up in anticipation of drilling will be lost. Provided that there has been good preparation (for example, in the effective execution of pre-siting exercises, materials collection, and water-point committee formation) and good planning of follow-up activities (such as headworks construction), a rapid production of boreholes gives considerable credibility to the government and turns the initiative back to the community to live up to its side of the bargain.

Finally, a slower rate of implementation will make it even more difficult to meet service level targets. As it is, the project must work at full speed in order to keep pace with population growth !

FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS - D

m. *"..the current strategy for the implementation should be carefully evaluated on a participatory basis by a team of ministry officials and independent consultants with a view to propose modifications where appropriate.."* (p.x)"

n. *Pilot projects should be developed to provide opportunities for experimental implementation based on new methods.* (p.xi)

COMMENTS

Evaluation and review has been a continuous feature of programme development at all levels in recent years, the NORAD evaluation itself being part of this process. Throughout the document, the consultants hint that there may be fundamental flaws in the approach, but these are never clearly specified. No indication is given of what "modifications" may be required (apart from those recommended in the report itself) or what "new methods" might be piloted.

Internal evaluation mechanisms are currently being developed which should considerably improve the quality of data available for review purposes. Combined with the routine, regular evaluation missions carried out by sector donors, these improved information flows should be adequate for current needs. In addition, the current efforts to strengthen the capacity of the National Planning Agency of MFEPD, should further boost national monitoring and evaluation capacity, and reduce dependence on external consultants to undertake this task.

The proposal in the main body of the report to conduct follow-up studies on socio-economic and behavioural aspects of the programme is generally supported, perhaps with a view to incorporating these factors into regular reporting formats. Such studies should be undertaken under the supervision and direction of NAC.

The issue of conducting an evaluation of the integrated approach itself is currently under debate, and consensus has not yet been reached within the NAC.

FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS - E

o. Greater cooperation with NGOs recommended. (p.viii)

p. "...need to review the choice of building materials used for latrines.."(p.ix)

q. "need to adapt the maintenance system to the characteristics of each district." (p.ix)

r. CAWIDS to be reviewed. (p.xi)

s. Support should be given to the further development of the family well concept. (p.xi)

t. Support should be given to the development of appropriate cost recovery mechanisms. (p.x)

u. Further development of monitoring and evaluation systems recommended. (p.xii)

COMMENTS

These recommendations are generally supported. Most are already under consideration and/or implementation.